As regards the Manager in the Chief Engineer's Office, that post does not exist now. There is a Superintendent and he gets the same scale of pay as the Superintendents in the Secretariat. You want the Manager again. Your suggestion will be considered. You want separate Irrigation Section Officers to be appointed. That matter will also be considered.

54. Revision of the rules relating to ryots' roads.

Mr. D. C. Joseph (Member, Nominated) began by saying that the existing rules relating to the opening of ryots' roads were unworkable and that those rules were framed by the Government under certain peculiar circumstances. He said that members from north Travancore had been speaking about the necessity of opening new roads at several sessions of the Assembly, and that, as they were not satisfied with the replies of the Government, the people of some taluks, *e. g.*, Tiruvalla, came forward and volunteered to open new roads. When such roads were opened, Government took advantage of the same and framed the present inelastic rules. The Member then observed that the people of Travancore were accustomed to get the roads they required as a result of repeated representations, that shifting the responsibility of opening such roads from the Government to the people was an entirely new departure, and that such departure would work hardship unless it was gradual. He described how the people might at first be required to give the lands required for a particular road, receiving only one-half or one-fourth of their value, or even free in certain cases and how, when that condition was complied with, if the remaining work could be done by Government, many such roads might be expected to be opened in the State. Instead of such an easy arrangement, a set of new rules was brought into force purporting to offer facilities which no group of ryots would care to take advantage of. He referred to the mention made in the Dewan's Address to those rules and pointed out the following defects.

The initial difficulty was for the ryots to form themselves into an Association and to register it. The ryots of Travancore had not advanced so far as to unite for common purposes, especially in the matter of spending money. In the next place the Association had to acquire all the lands required for the road, depositing with the Government the sum necessary for meeting the compensation charges in respect of such among those lands as could not be secured free. The actual condition of the ryots had not been understood by the Government if they thought that nobody would refuse to part with their lands for such a purpose. There was nothing in the rules to prevent those who received compensation from using the roads brought into existance by the self-sacrifice of those who gave the lands free for that purpose. Again, the minimum width required, *viz.*, 22 feet, was too much, as no more width was needed for a village cart road than what was necessary for two carts to cross each other. In any case the Member thought that the villages belonging to the depressed classes should be exempted from the operation of such rules.

He then referred to the Administration Report for 1098 and stated that only 50 miles of such roads were taken over by the Government and that it was not clear why the Department had not taken charge of similar roads in other taluks opened two or three years ago. He mentioned the village road opened by the inhabitants of Vambannur and adjoining villages in the Neendakara *pakuthi* three years ago and said that that road had not been taken over by the Government for maintenance. That road which connected the Villukairi-Rajakkamangalam road and the Eraniel-Rajakkamangalam road had already been inspected by the Dewan. The lands surrendered were valuable and both labour and money had been spent on it. If the Government would not take up that road for maintenance on the ground that the people had not formed themselves into an Association as required by the rules, all that he could say in reply was that the rules stood in sore need of modification. The Member concluded by saying that, as Government could see that the rules were impracticable from the little advantage the ryots had been taking of them so far, they should meet the ryots half-way by modifying the rules suitably.

President's reply.—As regards the depressed classes, I may say that they have been already exempted from the operation of the rules *re*. ryots' roads. As you yourself have pointed out, the Dewan has referred to the revision of those rules in

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his opening Address. The inelasticity of these rules has been brought to the notice of the Government by the Chief Engineer and the question of amending the rules is now under their consideration.

The question of the Government taking the Vembannur ryots' road will be referred to the Chief Engineer.

55. Restoration of irrigation tanks in the Vilavankod taluk.

Mr. R. Sivaramakrishna Aiyar (Member, Municipal Council, Kuzhittura) brought to the notice of Government that there were 541 tanks in the Vilavankod taluk irrigating 8,491 acres of paddy lands and paying a tax of Rs. 49, 291 and odd. The Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072, classified all irrigation works into major, minor and petty. Under that classification, there were no major tanks in the taluk. There were about 100 minor tanks, the rest being petty irrigation tanks.

He then began to explain the object of Regulation III of 1072 and said that, though originally the responsibility of constructing, repairing and maintaining petty irrigation tanks devolved entirely on the ryots, it underwent a change with the result that Section 11 A was added to the Regulation, giving power to the Division Peishkar or any other officer duly authorised in that behalf to order the execution of a work at the cost of Government in the event of any accident being apprehended or happening to any petty or minor irrigation work.

So far as the Vilavankod taluk was concerned, the question of repairs was in his opinion vital. The question of maintenance would only be coming up later on. A G. O. had been issued imposing certain conditions on the ryots before the Government took up the responsibility of restoring such tanks and 4 tanks had been repaired under the provisions of that G. O. Though a special irrigation officer had been sanctioned for the investigation and preparation of estimates, more remained to be done and the Member suggested that steps be taken for providing Rs. 50,000 in the budget every year, since otherwise it might take 20 years before the people came to reap the benefit of the new scheme.

The Member then gave a list of the tanks which stood in urgent need of repair showing their extent, the area they would irrigate and the cost of repairing them and stated that, even if a sum of Rs. 50,000 was allotted every year, it would take 14 years to restore all the minor and petty irrigation tanks in the taluk.

His next request was that the principle enunciated by Government in regard to minor irrigation tanks should be followed in the case of petty irrigation tanks also, as otherwise the chance of the restoration of the latter classes of tanks would be far remote. The system of land tenures and the Marumakkathayam law of inheritance prevailing among the bulk of the people in the taluk contributed a great deal to the deplorable condition of those petty irrigation tanks, as the tenant was always in dread of deprivation of his land at the caprice of the Jenmi, and as the Karanavan by reason of his position did not care to spend any money on the improvement of the land. In the light of those circumstances, the Member requested that petty irrigation works might also be treated like minor ones.

President's reply.—A provision of Rs. 10,000 has been made in the budget for the current year's budget of the restoration of the tanks referred to. As you yourself have stated, a special irrigation officer for the investigation and preparation of estimates for the restoration of minor irrigation works has been sanctioned.

As regards the execution of works, two estimates have been sanctioned for the improvement of Karuppukulam and Nallurkulam, for Rs. 2,730 and Rs. 4,000 respectively, and the works are proceeding.

Some other tanks are also being taken up this year. The tank restoration work in the taluk will receive the needed attention at the hands of the Government.

56. Agricultural needs of the Neyyattinkara Taluk.

Mr. N. K. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Neyyattinkara taluk) stated at the outset that he was glad that some of the subjects covered by his representation had already begun to engage the attention of the Government. Nevertheless

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